

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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PASS AGRICULTURE FOR POERSTEL/FAS ELECTRONICALLY

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, NL
SUBJECT: STRIKE ACTIONS BEGIN

REF: THE HAGUE 621

1. THE NETHERLANDS FIRST GENERAL STRIKES IN SEVERAL YEARS GOT UNDERWAY SOMEWHAT LIMPLY FEB 7 WITH WALKOUTS OF SOME 3-8,000 WORKERS (DEPENDING UPON WHOSE TALLY YOU ACCEPT) IN VARIOUS SECTORS. STRIKE ACTIONS EXPANDED SLIGHTLY TODAY WITH UNION OFFICIALS CLAIMING THAT 13,000 MEN WERE NOW OUT. RUSH-HOUR COMMUTERS IN AMSTERDAM AND ROTTERDAM WERE ALSO AFFECTED THIS MORNING AS BUS AND TROLLEY OPERATORS, WHO AS PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEES ARE PROHIBITED FROM STRIKING, ABANDONED THEIR RUNS FOR SEVERAL HOURS IN SOLIDARITY WITH STRIKERS.

2. A STRIKE OF WORKERS IN A NUMBER OF DAIRY PRODUCTS COOPERA-
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TIVES WAS AVOIDED AT THE LAST MINUTE WHEN COOPERATIVE OWNERS SUCCESSFULLY SOUGHT AN INJUNCTION AGAINST THE UNION. UNDER THE JUDGE'S ORDER, THE UNION IS FORBIDDEN FROM STOPPING WORK FOR A PERIOD OF TWENTY DAYS, DURING WHICH TIME BOTH SIDES SHOULD CONTINUE TO TRY TO REACH AN AGREEMENT. SIMILAR INJUNCTIONS ARE BEING SOUGHT IN OTHER SECTORS, WITH A DECISION ON MEAT PROCESSING PLANTS DUE TONIGHT.

3. EFFORTS TO CONTINUE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN MANAGEMENT AND WORKERS OF THE HUGE PHILIPS GROUP SEEM TO HAVE FAILED, ALTHOUGH STRIKE ACTION ON THE FIRST DAY WAS PUT OFF. THE UNIONS HAVE TARGETED ONLY TWO PHILIPS UNITS BUT BY SELECTING TRANSPORT WORKERS AT EINDHOVEN, WHICH HANDLE ALL INTRA-COMPANY HAULAGE, AND PRODUCTION WORKERS AT A PLANT IN TILBURG, WHICH MANUFACTURES A SMALL PART USED IN ALL TELEVISION SETS, PHILIPS EXECUTIVES SAY THAT MANY COMPANY OPERATIONS WILL BE BLOCKED. ECON COUNSELOR WAS TOLD BY A PHILIPS OFFICIAL HERE THAT THE COMPANY SEES ONLY THREE POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO THE DISPUTE: (1) THE GON COULD, ALTHOUGH HE THOUGHT IT UNLIKELY, PERMIT INDUSTRY TO PASS THROUGH THE COST-OF-LIVING WAGE INCREASE INTO PRODUCT PRICES; (2) GON COULD USE A 700-MILLION GUILDER WINDFALL IN COLLECTED SOCIAL SECURITY PAYMENTS TO AMELIORATE OR TO PAY FOR A COST-OF-LIVING PACKAGE; OR (3) GOVERNMENT COULD OFFSET ANY COL INCREASE WITH A REDUCTION IN CORPORATE TAXES. HE THOUGHT THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD PROBABLY WAIT A BIT BEFORE STEPPING IN; ITS FIRST ATTEMPT LAST WEEK BEING BADLY TIMED.

4. THUS FAR, ACTIONS IN THE HARBORS AT ROTTERDAM AND AMSTERDAM HAVE BEEN RELATIVELY MINOR. WORKERS IN A FEW STEVEDORING AND FREIGHT FORWARDING FIRMS HAVE GONE OUT AND CROSS-CHANNEL FERRY TRAFFIC HAS APPARENTLY BEEN HALTED. GRAIN IMPORTERS WHO HAD FEARED BLOCKAGE OF THEIR OPERATIONS HAVE NOT BEEN HIT.
MCCLOSKEY

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